Misconceptions about Consultation

Megan Soulsby

Liberty University

Annotated Bibliography/Summary

Consultation has been around in the school psychology world for a while but as Erchul and Meyers (1996) pointed out there are many misconceptions about consultation. They give suggestions on how to better consultation within the schools. The first suggestion is that in the consulting procedure, everyone must understand that there is ideally no authority or power differential between these members. This needs to be understood by both the consultee and consultant that telling people what to do is not the most effective way to create a change of thought.

Erchul and Meyers (1996) pointed out that in consulting one of the most difficult tasks to remember is that a teacher and psychologist are on equal levels. For some psychologist view the difference in pay range between the teacher and the counselor earns the counselor the right to have the upper hand in the situation. This though is not true. The most effective method for the students is for the counselor and teacher to view them as a collaborative consultation where they both give their points of view

The next misconception was said to be that consultation needs to be seen as voluntary information. It can be used and it does not have to be used. The consultant is there to help if can. The consulting process must be seen everyone in the process is equal partners. Another issue that was discussed was the ultimate outcome of the situation still rests in the hands of the consultee and not the consultant. The client’s welfare is still in the hands of the consultee. And the last issue that was discussed was that the conversations stated between the consultee and consultant must stay confidential. The only time that the consultant would not be requires to stay quiet would be if the consultant thought someone was in danger.

Critique

Erchul and Meyers (1996) has some very effective insight in consulting as a method of collaboration. Teachers and counselors must work together in order to better our school systems and children. After all, though the counselor may have had more studies about the human mind and behavior, not every child is a text book case. It is very important for the counselor to listen to the behaviors and ideas that the teacher has for this kid because she is the one that observes him day in and day out. Consulting as Erchul and Meyers (1996) explains will not work if there is an egalitarian problem. Both parties must view themselves as equals and working towards a common goal. The teacher must also keep in mind that ultimately this is her student and though she can collaborate and consult with other teachers and counselors, the main responsibility lies on her shoulders. Thus the administration also must be made aware of the situation and when consulting and collaboration has occurred.

There was one issue that Erchul and Meyers (1996) stated that this author did not agree with. They said, “although the teacher and the psychologist are likely to both be women, and of the similar age and socioeconomic status…” (5). Even looking at when this was written sixteen years ago this author still views this comment as not politically correct and sexist. A comment like this could cause a person to discredit what an author is trying to say or prove.

Overall, this article gives good insight to both a teacher and the counselor and their roles during the consulting and collaboration process.

References

Erchul, W., & Myers, L. (1995). *Some Misguided Assumptions Underlying the Practice of School Consultation*. Retrieved from ERIC database.